



Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number:
P.C. – 11/18/02 Item: 2.m

File Number:
GP02-T-04

Council District and SNI Area:
Various (see attached location
descriptions)

Major Thoroughfares Map Number:
Various

Assessor's Parcel Number(s):
Various

Project Manager:
Mike Mena

GENERAL PLAN REPORT

2002 Fall Hearing

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

A General Plan amendment to amend the Trails and Pathways Policies and modify the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram.

TEXT REFERENCE:

Amend Chapter IV.; Goals and Policies; Trails and Pathways Policies; and Chapter V.; Land Use/Transportation Diagram; Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram; page 237.

LOCATION: Citywide**ACREAGE:** N/A

APPLICANT/OWNER:

Staff/Various

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:

A Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted on October 23, 2002.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed modifications to the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram and the associated text amendment.

Approved by:
Date:

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a staff initiated text amendment request to modify the Trails and Pathways Policies to support efforts to convert “rails to trails” and modify the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram to add fifteen trails and change two that have been identified in the adopted “Greenprint” and/or Strong Neighborhood Initiative Improvement Plans.

BACKGROUND

The Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram identifies San Jose’s most outstanding natural amenities and establishes guidelines to develop and preserve these resources. The Diagram depicts Rural Scenic Corridors, Urban Throughways and Trail and Pathway Corridors. Trail and Pathway Corridors, as identified on the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram, are part of an interconnecting trail system that provides links to parks and open spaces within the City as well as neighboring cities. Many of these Corridors follow existing creeks and rivers and include public street right-of-ways. The Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram in the San Jose 2020 General Plan identifies these systems and designates the most feasible and accessible routes for these trails.

The Trail and Pathway Corridor system identifies various types of trails for hikers, walkers, joggers, equestrians, and bicyclists. These users can access the trails and pathways for recreational activities as well as utilize specific routes for commuting. The addition of the proposed trails, would be consistent with the intent of a network of trails and pathways that provide recreational opportunities, alternative means of commuting and access to other parks and open areas. This network would provide residents with the ability to enjoy the hillsides, baylands, creeks and streams that are located within the City and throughout Santa Clara County.

ANALYSIS

While the San Jose 2020 General Plan discusses the need to consider the conversion of abandoned railroad right-of-ways into multi-purpose trails, these conversions are not reinforced within Trails and Pathways Policies. Therefore, in order to reinforce opportunities that may be presented to convert abandoned railroad right-of-ways to multi-purpose trails, staff is proposing to incorporate the attached Text amendment into the Trails and Pathways Policies of the General Plan.

The amendment proposes incorporating fifteen trails/linkages into the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram and modifying two currently designated trails identified within the San Jose 2020 General Plan (see attached maps) in order to reflect existing and planned trails. It should be clarified that designated trails on the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram represent a conceptual alignment and location, and that the actual pathway of each trail at build-out may need to vary from the designated alignments in order to resolve site specific constraints. Planning staff has been working closely with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services and the Strong Neighborhood Initiative staff to identify the proposed modifications to the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram which reflect recent planning efforts to complete the City’s trail and pathway network. These recent efforts include the City Council adoption of the “San Jose Greenprint”, a strategic plan to enhance San Jose parks, recreation facilities and programs. Also

in the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Improvement Plans, the community has identified desired neighborhood trails.

Consistency with the “San Jose Greenprint”

The “San Jose Greenprint” is a 20-year strategy plan which includes a citywide trail system. A network of trails would encourage alternate modes of transportation and provide access to recreational facilities. The incorporation of the proposed trail system identified in the “San Jose Greenprint” into the General Plan Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram would reinforce this network.

The following trail(s) are proposed to be incorporated into the Diagram, including the modification of two (2) trails in order to reflect the adopted “San Jose Greenprint”:

- ❖ Saratoga Creek Trail – consists of a public street right-of-way for the portion of Saratoga Creek between Prospect Road and the terminus of Castle Glen Avenue.
- ❖ Coyote Creek Trail – provides access from the Coyote Creek Trail to San Jose State University.
- ❖ San Francisco Bay Trail – reflects the City Council adopted Bay Trail Master Plan depicting alternative routes connecting the Guadalupe River Trail with the Coyote Creek Trail along Grand Boulevard and other streets.
- ❖ Hetch Hetchy Trail Corridor- would connect the Guadalupe River Trail Corridor with the Coyote Creek Trail Corridor via Tasman Drive. This trail would replace the need for the River Oaks Parkway Trail Corridor, which is proposed for removal from the Diagram.
- ❖ Bambi Lane Trail – connects Goss Elementary School, Capitol Park and Lo Bue Park via Massar Avenue.
- ❖ Vasona Light Rail Connection – provides connection between the Los Gatos Creek Trail and the planned Vasona Light Rail Station.
- ❖ Guadalupe Trail – provides an alternate public street right-of-way along Willow Street for the area between Blackford School and Coe Avenue to address alignment constraints along this portion of Los Gatos Creek.
- ❖ Willow Glen Spur Trail – follows the Union Pacific Railroad spur, connecting the Los Gatos Creek Trail with the Coyote Creek Trail and Kelley Park.
- ❖ State Highway 87 Trail – this existing trail connects the Coyote Creek Trail with the Capitol Expressway and the light rail stations along State Highway 87.
- ❖ Fowler Creek Trail Corridor – this planned trail would terminate at the planned Fowler Creek Park and Chaboya Middle School and run parallel with Fowler Creek to the foothills.
- ❖ Montgomery Hill/Yerba Buena Trail Connector – this proposed trail would connect the existing Montgomery Hill Trail with the existing Yerba Buena Trail via the Evergreen Community College.

- ❖ Montgomery Hill and Yerba Buena Trails – these proposed trail alignments would reflect the existing trail.
- ❖ Calero Creek Trail – spurs off of the Los Alamitos/Calero Creek Park Chain connecting to the Coyote/Alamitos Trail towards the Santa Teresa County Park.

Consistency with Strong Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) Improvement Plans

The Five Wounds/Brookwood Terrace and the Burbank/Del Monte SNI Improvement Plans recommend reuse of the abandoned Union Pacific Rail right-of-way as a pedestrian/bikeway through neighborhood areas. The proposed rail-to-trail conversions would provide safe, pleasant off-road connections between neighborhoods and parks. Below is a description of the proposed rail-to-trail conversions:

- ❖ Five-Wounds/Brookwood Terrace Trail - would connect Lower Silver Creek with McKinley Elementary School, Olinder Martin Park, Coyote Creek Trail and Kelley Park to the south.
- ❖ Western Reach of the Willow Glen Spur Trail – would connect the Guadalupe River Trail to Los Gatos Creek as identified within the “San Jose Greenprint”.

Other Trail Alignments

An additionally proposed trail alignment includes the Highway 237 Bike Trail. The inclusion of the Highway 237 Bike Trail would reflect the existing bicycle right-of-way. This bike path/trail extends from Gold Street to the City of Milpitas. The Highway 237 Bike Trail is a special pathway completely separated from motor vehicle traffic. Pedestrians may also use bike paths.

Consistency with General Plan

The proposed additional policy and Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram changes are consistent with the overall goals and policies of the San Jose 2020 General Plan. The Parks and Recreation Goals are intended to provide an assortment of parks and recreational facilities which are easily accessible to residents. Updating of the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram would be consistent with Parks and Recreation Policy #8, which encourages the conversion of abandoned railroad rights-of-way into multi-purpose trails. The subject amendment is also consistent with Parks and Recreation Policy #14, which states that bikeways, hiking trails, equestrian trails, rest areas and picnicking accommodations should be provided, wherever feasible, within parks and trails corridors designated on the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram. The subject amendment is also consistent with several policies related to trails and pathways; in particular Trails and Pathways Policy #5 which states that the City should promote cooperative interagency planning of pathways, bikeways and equestrian trails.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Community meetings that were held on October 8 and 10, 2002 were noticed on the City's website and a hearing notice on the subject amendment to be heard before the Planning Commission in November and City Council in December was published in the San Jose Post Record. In addition, the Department's web-site contains information regarding the General Plan process, amendments, staff reports, and hearing schedule. This site is used by the community to keep informed of the status of the amendments. No comments were received by the public regarding the proposed amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the proposed amendments to the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram and the associated text amendment.

Attachments

\\PBCE002\GP_Team\2002 Annual Review\Staff Reports\Fall Review\GP02-T-04.doc

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT

Amend Chapter IV. Goals and Policies; Trails and Pathways; Trails and Pathways Policies, page 100 as follows:

Trails and Pathways Policies:

- #10. In addition to trails proposed along major watercourses, additional trail routes should be established on abandoned railroad rights-of-way.